

REMARKS

The Examiner has maintained the contention that claims 1 to 4, 6 to 8 and 10 to 15 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by Miloslavsky. Applicants respectfully disagree for the following reasons.

All of the independent claims have been amended in a like manner to claim 1 as described below.

Claim 1 of the present invention as amended now reads as:

"A method of routing a contact in a network comprising a plurality of contact centers, said method comprising the steps of:-

a) receiving a contact at any one of the contact centers, said any one of the contact centers being designated a source contact center with respect to the received contact;

b) sending a reservation request from the source contact center to each of the contact centers including itself at the same time, said reservation request being for an agent with a specified relative intrinsic value;

c) for said reservation request, receiving at the source contact center from each of one or more of the contact centers, a value of the specified intrinsic and an associated agent identifier;

d) at said designated source contact center, determining from said value of the specified intrinsic and said associated agent identifier received from said each of one or more of the contact centers a suitable agent in any of said one or more of the contact centers for processing the received contact;

e) routing the received contact ~~from the designated contact center to one of the agents on the basis of the received intrinsic~~ said suitable agent." (additions identified by underscoring, deletions by strikethrough).

It can be seen in the present invention as claimed that any one of the plurality of contact centers can be designated as a source contact center in respect of a contact received at that contact center. Another contact center can be designated as a source contact center for another subsequent contact received at that contact center. Thus, any contact center can be designated a source contact center for a respective contact received thereby. Each of said plurality of contact centers is arranged in response to being designated as a source contact center for a received contact to send a reservation request from said contact center to all of the contact centers including itself at the same time. Subsequently, upon receiving at the designated source contact center a value of a specified intrinsic and an associated agent identifier from each of one or more of the contact centers, it (i.e. the designated contact center itself) determines from said value of the specified intrinsic and said associated agent identifier received from said each of one or more of the contact centers a suitable agent in any of said one or more of the contact centers for processing the received contact and routes the contact from the designated contact center to said suitable agent. Therefore, despite the fact that the plurality of contact centers in exemplary embodiments are connected to each other by a common communication means such as a CLAN, it is a feature of the network of contact centers that if any one of the contact centers becomes inoperable it does not prevent the remaining contact centers from implementing the foregoing contact sharing scheme between them because there is **no single means common to the contact centers responsible for selecting an agent and routing a contact from one contact center to another.** In this latter connection, the Examiner well knows that one of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that a CLAN as provided in exemplary embodiments of the invention is a communication network having multiple links interconnecting the plurality of contact centers whereby the failure of one part (link) of the CLAN is highly unlikely to cause failure of the whole CLAN network. In fact, the CLAN is illustrated as comprising a ring structure which, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize has built in tolerance to fault occurrences. Furthermore, one of ordinary skill knows that any network of links comprising the means for interconnecting a plurality of contact centers is much more fault tolerant than a single box or a conglomeration of boxes having single

links therebetween as disclosed by Miloslavsky in connection with the routing server 192, the statistics server 190 and the database 194.

The attempt in the advisory office action to compare the exemplary CLAN as disclosed in the present application as comprising a single means common to the contact centers that is as prone to failure as the boxes 192, 190, 194 common to the contact centers of Miloslavsky is simply incorrect. Furthermore, this line of argument is logically incoherent because the CLAN is not a common means for selecting an agent as previously argued by the applicants.

It is quite clear from figure 2 and its corresponding description in Miloslavsky that the multiple call center architecture taught by this reference uses the routing server 192, the statistics server 190 and the database 194 as a network level means common to all of the call centers for selecting an agent and routing a call received at one call center to another (see abstract). This is made particularly clear from the method steps illustrated in figure 4A which discloses that a CTI server associated with a switch that has received a call passes (figure 4A, 266) information to the routing server 192 and passes (figure 4A, 268) call information to the stats server 190. It is the routing server 192 that selects (figure 4A, 274) an agent and which controls (figure 4A, 280, 282 and figure 4B, 286 to 292) the call receiving switch to pass the received call to another switch.

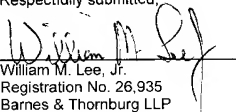
There is no disclosure anywhere in Miloslavsky and particularly not in column 2, lines 30 to 52 or column 6, lines 46 to 56 that teaches or suggests that a contact center upon receiving a contact and being designated as a source contact center for that contact sends a reservation request to all of the contact centers including itself. Nor does Miloslavsky teach or suggest that any of the contact centers upon receiving a reservation request from a source contact center sends a value of a specified intrinsic and an associated agent identifier to the source contact center. It is clear from Miloslavsky that, upon receiving a call at a switch, a CTI server associated with the switch passes information to the routing server and statistics database and it is the routing server that selects an agent and then controls routing of the received contact from the call receiving switch to another switch. The routing server 192, the statistics server 190 and the database 194 are all common to the network of switches (and their associated CTI servers) and, as such, should any

one of them fail, the contact sharing scheme taught by Miloslavsky also fails. Therefore, it can be concluded that Miloslavsky does not teach all of the limitations of claim 1, nor does the disclosure of this reference render claim 1 obvious since Miloslavsky teaches a network level means common to all of the switches for sharing received calls between the switches (call centers) and selecting an agent for a received contact. In contrast, in the claimed invention, it is the contact center designated as the source contact center for a respective received contact that selects a suitable agent. There is nothing in Miloslavsky that would lead one skilled in the art to the arrangement of contact centers as claimed which do not require a common network level means such as a routing server to effect sharing of received contacts. Furthermore, the arrangement as claimed provides a useful contribution to the art because it is much more fault tolerant than the system taught by Miloslavsky, as previously argued.

In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration of the claims as amended is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William M. Lee, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

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